



State of Connecticut

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March 9, 2009

Chairman Andrew McDonald, Chairman Michael Lawlor, Ranking Member John Kissel, Ranking Member Arthur O'Neill and other distinguished Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of ***SB No. 650 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF TRUSTS FOR THE CARE OF DOMESTIC ANIMALS***

Many Connecticut residents invest a great deal in the care of their pets and consider them like their human loved ones. There is research that shows pets can extend a persons life, help victims recover from tragedy or abuse, provide companionship for those that have lost a loved one and generally improve the quality of one's life. There are now more childless couples and an older population who are increasingly attached to their pets. As one of my constituents noted, "pets are essential to my life – just as friends, family, and spouses are. They embody every aspect of each of these."

The question of who cares for a pet after they are gone is troubling to many pet owners. Pet owners are seeking a process to ensure their pets are not neglected abandoned or euthanized if they die before their domestic animals do. Some pets, like parrots, can live for 40 to 80 years. If a pet owner becomes ill, incapacitated or dies, decisions should be made ahead to provide a pet with food and water, shelter, veterinary care, and companionship. To ensure that a beloved pet will continue to receive care, it's critical to plan ahead. Pet ownership is a responsibility, and this proposal allows pet owners to make plans for carrying out that responsibility in the event that their pets survive them

Although the residents who contacted me feel strongly that they would like assistance in their effort to secure their pet's health/well-being after they are gone, many other pets are too often forgotten when the owner dies. These loyal companions may become abandoned, neglected and even put to sleep. By approving this proposal we will be highlighting this issue and call the public's attention to the need for providing, at the minimum, the basics for the care and feeding of an orphaned family pet.

I ask the Joint Committee on Judiciary to unanimously approve the measure before you. We should follow the example of states like Rhode Island and make sure we have a law on the books that spells out what pet owners can do to protect, and provide for, their pets when they are no longer able to do so

In addition, I have provided the Joint Committee on Judiciary substitute language for SB 650, and I ask you to incorporate this language into SB 650 when considering this proposal.

Thank you for your thoughtful and careful consideration, and I am prepared to answer any question you may have.